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SECURITY INFORMATION

1951

3 December 1951

SUBJECT: NIE-51: PROBABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN YUGOSLAVIA AND THE LIKELIHOOD  
OF ATTACK UPON YUGOSLAVIA, THROUGH 1952.  
(For the consideration of the Board)

THE PROBLEM

To estimate probable developments in Yugoslavia and the likelihood  
of attack upon Yugoslavia, through 1952.

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CONCLUSIONS

1. The Yugoslav government will almost certainly continue its present limited cooperation with the West.
2. The present regime in Yugoslavia will almost certainly retain firm control over the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), the armed forces, and the security forces.
3. The CPY will undoubtedly retain its monopoly of power, despite superficial relaxation of controls and temporary modification of the economic goals of the Party.
4. There is growing dissatisfaction among the peasants and some discontent within the middle and lower ranks of the CPY, but neither is likely to undermine the stability of the regime.
5. The assassination or death of Tito would weaken the regime but would be unlikely to break its hold over the country or to produce fundamental changes in the regime's foreign or domestic policies.
6. Cominform efforts to penetrate and undermine the regime will almost certainly fail.
7. Satellite capabilities for an attack upon Yugoslavia have further increased since the spring of 1951. If the Satellites, with Soviet logistic support, should attack before 1953, they could probably overcome organized Yugoslav resistance within a few months.
8. A Satellite attack upon Yugoslavia is possible but is unlikely unless the Kremlin is prepared to accept general war.

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DISCUSSION

I. INTRODUCTION

9. NIE 29, "Probability of an Invasion of Yugoslavia in 1951," (20 March 1951), concluded that:

- (a) The ultimate Soviet objectives in Yugoslavia are to eliminate the Tito government, to replace it by a regime subservient to the USSR, and to integrate Yugoslavia politically, economically, and strategically into the Satellite structure.
- (b) It is unlikely that the present regime in Yugoslavia can be overthrown in 1951 by a Soviet-inspired coup or by internal revolt.
- (c) The continuing military build-up in the neighboring Satellite states has reversed the previous balance of military strength between the Satellites and Yugoslavia and has given the Satellites the capability of launching a major invasion of Yugoslavia with little warning. A Satellite invasion of Yugoslavia, under central Soviet direction and with full Soviet logistical support, has the capability of forcing the Yugoslav armed forces back into the mountainous region along the Adriatic. Yugoslav guerrilla resistance would continue long after the collapse of organized military resistance, particularly if immediate Western military assistance were provided.
- (d) The large-scale Satellite military preparations do not provide conclusive evidence that a Satellite attack on Yugoslavia is scheduled for 1951, or within any specific period of time.
- (e) The Kremlin may estimate that an attack by the Satellites

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in 1951 would not incur effective Western intervention or precipitate general war. On the other hand, the Kremlin may estimate that the Western powers would give large-scale support to Yugoslavia, which would create a greater risk of general war than the USSR was willing to accept. Finally, the Kremlin may be fully prepared for the eventuality of general war and may launch an attack upon Yugoslavia regardless of the risks involved.

(f) Although it is impossible to determine which course the Kremlin is likely to adopt, we believe that the extent of Satellite military and propaganda preparations indicates that an attack upon Yugoslavia should be considered a serious possibility.

10. NIE 29/1, "Review of the Conclusions of NIE 29, 'Probability of an Invasion of Yugoslavia in 1951,'" (4 May 1951), stated that although developments from 20 March 1951 through 4 May 1951 did not warrant the conclusion that a Satellite attack would take place in 1951 these developments did give added emphasis to the conclusion of NIE 29 that an attack should be considered a serious possibility.

11. Since these estimates were published, the need for an estimate of probable developments in Yugoslavia and of the likelihood of attack through 1952 has become apparent due to three major developments:

(a) Increasing discontent, especially among the peasants, resulting from the regime's domestic policies.

(b) Continuing increase in the capabilities of the Satellite armed forces.

(c) Increased economic and military aid from the West and increasing indications that the West would support Tito in case of attack.

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II. YUGOSLAVIA AND THE WEST.

12. It is most unlikely that the Yugoslav government will have any alternative except to continue the present limited cooperation with the West. There seems no possibility of a reconciliation between Tito and the Kremlin, and Yugoslavia has neither the military nor the economic strength to stand completely alone. However, in his relation with the West, Tito will make as few concessions as possible. He will resolutely defend Yugoslav independence and Yugoslav Communism. He will probably be willing to develop closer economic and military relations with the free nations of Western Europe, but he is unlikely to join formally any of the groupings now organized or being organized. Within the UN, he will continue to oppose the Western powers on issues involving their former colonial possessions.

III. INTERNAL UNREST.

13. Now, as in the past, most of the Yugoslavs are opposed to Communism. The power of the regime rests on the CPY, the armed forces and the security forces. There is little likelihood that the CPY will lose its monopoly of political power during the period of this estimate, or that the firm control of the regime over the Party, the army, or the security forces will be shaken.

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14. There is increasingly evident discontent among the peasants, and some discontent within the middle and lower ranks of the CPY. In both cases the discontent is related to the over-ambitious program of industrialization.

Peasant Unrest.

15. From the outset, the regime has placed a heavy strain on the population, particularly on the peasant majority. Until recently, the regime relied upon collectivization of agriculture, upon forced delivery of foodstuffs, and upon other repressive measures to hold peasant discontent in check and to ensure adequate food supplies for the growing number of industrial workers.

16. In recent months, possibly in an effort to conciliate Western opinion, the regime has relaxed some of the more repressive measures and has abandoned the forced delivery of foodstuffs. So far, this relaxation has encouraged the peasants to express their grievances more openly. Peasant resistance mounted in the fall of 1951 when the government restricted or denied the peasant's right to withdraw from state agricultural cooperatives on the expiration of their three year contracts for trial membership. So long as the regime sacrifices the production of consumer goods to the needs of the program for industrialization, and so long as the program of collectivization is maintained, peasant discontent will almost certainly continue and will probably grow.

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17. Although the regime has refused to modify its goal of an industrialized and collectivized economy, there will probably be some slight and temporary readjustments within the period of this estimate.

- (a) Additional measures will probably be taken to decentralize administrative control and to encourage initiative through increasing the authority and responsibility of local management and labor and through allowing enterprises to retain a portion of their profits.
- (b) It is almost certain that within the next few months the regime will transfer additional resources from its program of industrialization to the production of consumer goods in order to induce the peasants to increase food deliveries.
- (c) There will probably be little increase in the amount of arable land collectivized during 1952. Recent evidence indicates that the least successful collectives will be broken up and the land returned to peasant owners. Tito has made clear, however, that collectivization of the land remains an objective of the regime.
- (d) Current and future peasant discontent will be firmly handled on a local level, but with such discretion that relations with the West will not be impaired.

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18. We believe that discontent among the peasants is not likely to become a serious threat to the stability of the regime within the period of this estimate and that the regime will probably be able to cope effectively with peasant discontent. Tito's control of the CPY, the armed forces, and the security forces is firm. On the other hand, anti-Communist elements in Yugoslavia are sharply divided and lack effective leadership. Finally, the nationalism of the peasants impels them to support Tito in his struggle against the Cominform.

Unrest within the CPY.

19. Discontent also exists in the middle and lower ranks of the CPY. Some pro-Soviet sentiment still exists in these groups, and they are disturbed by the Western orientation of the regime. Moreover, they have lost prestige and power as a result of the relaxation of controls and of the regime's attempt to penalize officials guilty of misusing their powers.

20. The high officials of the CPY are apparently not troubled by the current shifts of policy, which they almost certainly regard as a "temporary retreat." Such adjustments have always been recognized by Communists as compatible with Communist strategy. Moreover, it must be apparent to any Yugoslav Communist who has supported Tito that the likelihood of his survival in a regime controlled by Moscow is negligible.

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21. Those members of the middle and lower ranks of the CPY who have expressed dissatisfaction with the regime's relaxations of policy are being gradually removed from office, as are those who have made themselves excessively unpopular because of their fanaticism and severity. A quiet purge of the dissatisfied elements within the CPY will continue at least through the winter of 1951-1952. This purge will strengthen the regime's control over the Party and also increase its popularity. Although there will probably be some liberalization of the administration, control will remain firmly in the hands of the present Communist leaders.

Probability and Consequences of a Coup

22. Efforts of the Cominform to penetrate and undermine the regime by subversive means have thus far failed. Almost certainly the regime's large and efficient security forces will be able to discover and liquidate any officials over whom the Cominform is able to acquire influence.

23. A coup d'etat directed against Tito by high members of the CPY, the armed forces, the security forces, or by other dissatisfied elements is unlikely. Tito now commands the loyalty and obedience of the Party and the armed and security forces, and even opponents of the regime apparently prefer it to the reestablishment of alien control from Moscow.

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24. The assassination of Tito remains a possibility. His loss would be a serious shock to the regime, but it is almost certain that the CPY, the armed forces, and the security forces would rally behind his successors. Power during the months immediately following the death of Tito would probably be concentrated in the hands of Pankovic and Kardelj. Through the period of this estimate, the foreign and domestic policies of the new leaders would almost certainly follow those established during the past three years by Tito. Discord over domestic issues might develop within the ruling group after the first few months, but fear of Soviet attack would probably reduce the extent of such disagreements.

IV. THE MILITARY SITUATION

The Yugoslav Armed Forces

25. The Yugoslav ground forces now consist of 325,000 men organized into 33 divisions, of which two are mechanized. The size of these forces is not expected to increase significantly within the period of this estimate. Their fighting ability is high, and they are supplemented by 60,000 members of the Frontier Guards (KNOJ) and by security forces ~~estimated~~ estimated at 40,000. The airforce has 726 aircraft, of which 393 are stationed with tactical units. All of the aircraft are of German or Soviet World War II design and construction, and lack of modern equip-

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was until recently causing some demoralization in the Yugoslav airforce. The capabilities of the Yugoslav navy are currently negligible.

26. The strength of the Yugoslav armed forces has remained approximately constant throughout the past two or three years, though the deterioration of Yugoslav materiel may have proceeded at a rate more rapid than the rate of improvement in morale, training, and staff work. The military supplies thus far provided by the West have been very limited and have consisted almost entirely of light equipment. Current Yugoslav military capabilities are seriously restricted by the following:

- (a) Insufficient quantity and poor quality of much of the equipment.
- (b) Heterogeneity of present equipment, mostly of Soviet and and German World War II stocks.
- (c) Lack of spare parts and of proper ammunition.
- (d) Severe shortage of heavy weapons, particularly of anti-tank artillery, anti-aircraft artillery, and armor.
- (e) Inadequate and largely obsolescent air force equipment.
- (f) Lack of adequate general staff tactics and techniques, particularly in planning and coordinating the movements of large forces.

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27. US military equipment scheduled for delivery under the military aid agreement signed recently is intended to replace some of the materiel now used by the Yugoslav armed forces and to supply newly organized supporting units. Little of this equipment will be delivered before mid-1952. No real increase of Yugoslav military capabilities can be expected before the end of 1952, because the new equipment must be delivered to the units, the troops must be trained in its operation and maintenance, and staff work must be improved.

The Satellite Armed Forces.

28. Yugoslavia's military capabilities, in relation to those of the neighboring Satellites, have declined steadily during the past two years. The ground forces of Albania, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria are now estimated at 495,000 men, organized into 39 divisions, of which 4 are armored and 2 mechanized. These forces have grown in size approximately 50 percent from January 1950 through September 1951, and it is believed they will increase an additional 27 percent by the end of 1952. The Kremlin is reorganizing the Satellite ground forces so that they will conform to the Soviet pattern. The Bulgarian army is apparently the most loyal and formidable, with its 13 divisions almost fully equipped with Soviet materiel, reserve stockpiles available, and good morale.

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29. The ground forces of the Satellites adjacent to Yugoslavia are supported by air forces which together possess more than 1100 aircraft. These air forces have more than doubled in size since May 1951, and particular emphasis has been placed upon ground support aircraft.

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V. LIKELIHOOD OF ATTACK UPON YUGOSLAVIA.

30. The ultimate Soviet objectives in Yugoslavia remain the elimination of the Tito regime, the replacement of this regime by a government subservient to Moscow, and the political, economic, and military reintegration of Yugoslavia into the Soviet sphere. There is no conclusive evidence to indicate when or how the USSR intends to attain these objectives.

31. The following factors might indicate a Soviet intention to precipitate a Satellite attack upon Yugoslavia during 1952:

- (a) The increase in the capabilities of the armed forces of the Satellites. In an attack before 1953, the air forces of the adjacent Satellites could defeat the Yugoslav air force, and their ground forces, with Soviet logistic support, could overcome organized Yugoslav resistance and reduce Yugoslav forces to guerrilla warfare in the mountain redoubt area.
- (b) The Satellites adjacent to Yugoslavia have evacuated the majority of the civilians from key border areas.
- (c) Soviet and Satellite propaganda has attempted to erase the ideological difficulty connected with an attack on

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Tito by identifying him with Fascism and denying that he had even an early affiliation with Communism. Tito is also charged with participating in Western preparations for future aggression.

32. The increase in the armed strength of the Satellites during the last two years does not necessarily reflect a Soviet intention to launch an attack upon Yugoslavia during 1952. Satellite military strength would almost certainly have increased substantially during this period even if Yugoslavia had not defected. There has been no apparent sense of urgency in the development of the Satellite armed forces, or in the coordination of the military activities of the four neighboring countries. It is estimated that the Bulgarian, Rumanian, and Hungarian armed forces will not complete their reorganization and reach maximum effectiveness until the end of 1952 and the Albanian not until mid-1954.

33. The Satellite economic program, designed to advance simultaneously the industrial base and the immediate military capabilities of the Satellite area, has created an advanced state of war-readiness. There is, however, no indication that the long-term aims of the economic program are being sacrificed to achieve greater immediate war-readiness.

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34. Current Soviet and Satellite propaganda provides little evidence concerning the likelihood of an armed attack upon Yugoslavia within the period of this estimate. The volume of propaganda directed at Yugoslavia has remained constant. Recent propaganda is almost identical in its hostility with that of mid-1948. The mid-1951 declarations that the Yugoslav people "would find a way to freedom" disappeared by September and were apparently only a phase in the general war of nerves against Yugoslavia.

35. The Kremlin may believe that the existence of Tito now poses a less serious problem for the USSR than it has in the past and that the elimination of the Tito regime is not an urgent necessity. The threat of the Titoist heresy to Soviet control of the Satellites and the international Communist movement has for all practical purposes been checked, and the Kremlin probably realizes that Yugoslavia is not now and cannot become a serious military threat to the Satellites before 1953, if then.

36. Past Soviet actions suggest that the Kremlin considers Yugoslavia not as an isolated problem, but as one of several factors affecting the general position of the USSR. Consequently, there is little likelihood

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that the USSR will launch a Satellite attack upon Yugoslavia without carefully assessing the effect of such an attack upon the general Soviet political and strategic position.

37. It is unlikely that the Kremlin will loose a Satellite attack upon Yugoslavia unless it is prepared to accept general war. The growing cooperation between Yugoslavia and the Western Powers and the concrete indications of that cooperation in the last six months\* have probably convinced the USSR that even a Satellite attack would entail a very grave risk of general war. UN action in Korea and the progress of Western rearmament should further convince the Kremlin of the danger inherent in such an attack.

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\* Visit of Yugoslav Chief of Staff to US in May-June 1951.

London Conference of US, UK, and France regarding Tripartite Aid Program to Yugoslavia in June 1951.

Arrival of \$10,000,000 US military aid shipment in June 1951; arrival of second shipment in August-September 1951.

Visit of US Army Chief of Staff to Yugoslavia in October 1951.

Visits of Western officials, particularly US Congressmen, to Yugoslavia.

Signing of Military Aid Agreement between US and Yugoslavia on 14 November 1951.

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38. If the USSR is now prepared or should become prepared in 1952 to accept the risk of general war, it might launch an attack upon Yugoslavia. If such an attack were launched, it seems likely that only Satellite forces would be employed, at least initially. The Kremlin would probably claim that Yugoslavia had attacked one of the Satellites. It might claim that Satellite "volunteers" were assisting a group revolting against Tito.

39. Although Satellite military, economic, and propaganda preparations indicate that an attack upon Yugoslavia in 1952 is possible, we believe it is unlikely unless the USSR is willing to accept general war.

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